Cowboys

Canyon football coach Harry Welch observes as his team runs through drills.

Canyon's grid dynasty

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Canyon prides itself on hard practices because they help the team play "Cowboy football."

There is no easy explanation of "Cowboy football." If the team is pleased with its play, the coaches and players will say, "We played Cowboy football." If they play poorly, "We didn't play Cowboy football."

Probably the best way to describe the Canyon program is with a resume: In Coach Harry Welch's seven years, the Cowboys have compiled an 81-12 record, including a Southern Section record 46 straight games, won six league championships and three Tournament championships.

That's Cowboy football.

Those numbers certainly establish the program among the elite in Southern California. But in Canyon Country, the Cowboys are definitely No. 1.

"I can't believe it," said Earnie Logan, who was hired as an assistant after coaching at Antelope Valley in Mission Hills. "I've never seen so much community support in my life."

Every Tuesday night, Canyon coaches show game films from the previous week's game at Lang-

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ston Plaza. And every Tuesday night, an empty seat is hard to find at Longwell Plaza.

"We often outnumber the home crowd at away games," Canyon principal Dr. Bill White said. "I think our program brings a sense of pride to our community."

The [illegible] family has lived in Canyon Country since 1965 and have seen something the Cowboys never did: the early '70s. "I remember going to games when I was 8 or 9," said [illegible] Jr.

[illegible] brother Greg, 26, both played football at Canyon and one is found, along with their parents, at almost every Canyon game.

"You go up there and sit with the same people every week," said Greg McKenna, 25, a graduate of Valencia. "It's like a date."

Greg McKenna, 25, is a newcomer to the Santa Clara Valley. He moved to Canyon Country from Winnetka three months ago, but he's already discovered the Cowboys.

Millerman's brother-in-law is an assistant coach at Antelope, so when Canyon played the Indians Oct. 7, Millerman and his fiancee went to the game. It was only the second or third prep game Millerman attended after graduating from St. Genevieve's in 1981, but he's been a regular at Cowboy home games ever since.

"I thought I'd go and watch and was impressed with their play," Millerman said. "When we played high school football, we never saw a team that could pass the ball. If you had third and 14, you were pretty much dead. This team has fourth-and-eight and goes for it and gets it like every time ... just because they can pass the ball."

"I'm amazed at their offense."

A number of current Cowboy players went to Canyon games when they were still students at Sierra Vista Junior High and dreamed of growing up to be Cowboys. That tradition continues.

"We have students who, that's all they think about in the eighth grade," said Sierra Vista physical education teacher Mike Knutson. "They can't wait until they get to Canyon and start playing football."

More than likely, those eighth graders will be winners in their careers at Canyon, which has not experienced a losing season in the Wolchers. So why do the Cowboys keep winning year after year?

"I think that's an easy question," Harry Welch said. Said league coach Dick Filgenty, a former Welch assistant, "He has a philosophy of what it takes to be successful and he doesn't waver from that, ever."

An important part of Welch's philosophy is working hard in practice and being the best conditioned team on the field.

"Every one of our practices is serious," Welch said. "We don't tolerate anything less than a total effort."

If a player slacks off, he can be assured of a chewup view of a screaming Welch grabbing his face mask.

"You know when you screw up and he's staring you right in the face," McCune said. "You know it's coming, so you kind of shy away. After that, you don't screw up anymore."

Coaches aren't the only ones who grab face masks. If a player makes a mistake, teammates will often take the responsibility of correcting it. One player yelling at a teammate's or grabbing his shoulder pads is a common occurrence at Cowboy practices and games. Welch calls it "peer pressure."

"Peer pressure is so important in our society," Welch said. "That's why kids get into drugs. If something is such a strong negative, why not turn it around and make it work positively?"

Welch has his detractors. When two starters quit the team last season after the Cowboys got off to a 1-3 start, the critics became more vocal, charging Welch was too hard on his players.

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But one of the players returned, Canyon won nine straight games before losing to the semifinals to Channel Islands, and the critics were silent.

"When we lose, I'm criticized for everything," Welch said. "If we were losing the critics would jump out of the closets and stand in line to say bad things about me."

Joe Zacharia, a linebacker on all three of Canyon's Northern Conference championship teams, is one of Welch's most ardent supporters.

"I loved playing for Coach Welch," said Zacharia, who now plays for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "You want to win for him. He's a tremendous person to be around. He's like a father figure. Who doesn't want to see their dad win 46 games in a row?"

Zacharia sat out the season after blowing out his knee against Baylor in the season opener.

"I thought about Coach Welch a lot and what he'd do if it happened to him," Zacharia said. "He always tries to find something good in the bad. Like I blew my knee out, now I get an extra year to get my education and get my degree."

The Canyon players just have to endure one more practice this season before playing the final game of the season — the Division II championship game — Saturday at Antelope Valley High. It's the game many of them have been dreaming about since their days at Sierra Vista.

"If we have two points this SV, but give a good accounting of ourselves," Welch said, "we won't hear an angry word."

That's Cowboy football.

Kolin new parks director

By SHARON HORNELL
Signal staff writer

The City of the Santa Clarita has a new parks director.

City manager George Caravalho announced Thursday that Jeffrey Kolin, Anaheim's Superintendent of Recreation would join the Santa Clarita city staff on Jan. 9.

Kolin, whom Caravalho described as in his mid-30s, has over 14 years of experience in municipal recreation. He has also served as recreation director for the cities of Tustin and Newport Beach. He will be paid $62,400 plus relocation and other benefits.

Caravalho cited Kolin's creativity and enthusiasm as factors leading to Kolin's appointment. "In Anaheim, he had something called Corporate Challenge," where he got all the corporations involved in recreation," Caravalho said.

"We also got involved in daycare programs tied to recreation."

SCV hot spot for movie industry

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Chamber's Economic Development Committee. The committee was discussing subjects it might address in 1990 when the subject came up. After a number of suggestions, chamber president Lee Garrett added the motion picture industry to the list. "We are fast becoming a base for the film industry," Garrett said.

Santa Clarita city council member Jo Anne Darcy suggested the city could be involved in the liaison effort.

Brian Gormley of Gormley-Taket Inc. suggested that the chamber could assist in the liaison effort.

Vikki Rudolph, executive vice president of the chamber, said the chamber already performs much of the task informally, receiving calls from those looking for film locations and offering them suggestions. But, she said, "it's time to do something more formal than what we have in the past."

Rudolph suggested sitting down with those in the film industry to determine how the chamber can best act as a support group for the motion picture industry.

Darcy suggested a "mini convention" bringing SCV motion picture industry leaders together to discuss the topic.

A field trip to Valencia Studios, and perhaps other locations, was also suggested.

The motion picture industry has blossomed in the Santa Clarita Valley during recent years. Studies noted that filming activity in the Santa Clarita Valley might increase by 1,000,000 people working here during a year's time.

"When we are here, we are pouring money into the area," Lisser said, calling money to spend eating, renting land rooms, constructing sets, etc.

He indicated that in addition to the filming locations available, one of the draws of the Santa Clarita Valley is that there are a number of people involved in the industry who live in the SCV.